

Listing of the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1.-39. (Canceled)

40. (Previously Presented) A method for manipulating a sample comprising:
superimposing at least one digital, microscopic image of a section of at least one preparation on an image of a surface of the preparation;
placing at least one marking on the superimposed image, which marking defines a desired position at which at least one sample is to be punched out of the preparation;
punching out at least one sample from at least one defined position of at least one preparation with a needle; and
inserting said at least one sample into a hole in a sample carrier comprising at least one hole.
41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the sample is a tissue sample.
42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the preparation is a prepared tissue specimen.
43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the digital, microscopic image comprises several segments assembled prior to superimposing the image on the image of the surface of the preparation.
44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the digital, microscopic image has been straightened or had artifacts eliminated prior to superimposing the image on the image of the surface of the preparation.
45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the marking and/or its coordinates are saved in a database, together with an identifier for the preparation.
46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein several digital section images can be selected for each preparation.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein a display scale of section images, surface images and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.
48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein an orientation of section images, surface images and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.
49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be displaced.
50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein color of section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.
51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein a level of translucency of a surface image in relation to a section image can be modified.
52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein transparency of a section image can be modified.
53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein patient information or equivalent assigned to an identifier for the preparation, is displayed in combination with the superimposed image.
54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the placed marking is characterized.
55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 54, wherein the placed marking is numbered consecutively with other placed markings..
56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the placed marking can be selected and erased.
57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the placed marking can be selected and modified.
58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein at least one annotation can be assigned to the placed marking.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein a sample carrier for the insertion of the punched-out sample can be assigned to the placed markings.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein a specific hole in the sample carrier can be assigned to the placed marking.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein holes for samples in the sample carrier are arranged in a pattern and said pattern is formed by arrangement of the holes in the form of a binary code.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein a position of the surface of the preparation is detected before the sample punching procedure and detected position values are saved in conjunction with an identifier for the preparation.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein a position of the surface of the sample carrier is detected before the hole-punching procedure and detected position values are saved in conjunction with an identifier for the sample carrier.

64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein punching depth of the sample punching and hole punching can be selected and assigned to the marking.

65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the sample punching is started automatically after the placement of a last marking on a last preparation.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the sample punching procedure can be interrupted and continued.

67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein all holes are punched out from the sample carrier before the start of sample punching procedure.

68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the sample punching needle and/or hole punching needle are cleaned at least after several sample punchings and/or hole punchings.

69.-81. (Canceled)